

SENATE RESOLUTION 20

By Harris

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor Dr. Michael C. Ellis, Sr.,
the first African-American president of the
Tennessee Baptist Convention.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should recognize
those venerable religious leaders of this State as they celebrate milestones in their careers; and

WHEREAS, one such individual is Dr. Michael C. Ellis, Sr., an intrepid, inspirational
pastor who previously served as president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, born August 2, 1960, Dr. Michael C. Ellis, Sr., is the oldest child and only
son among the five children born to Pastor Willie C. Ellis and the late Mrs. Rose B. Ellis; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Ellis was converted and baptized in 1978 at Saint Stephens Baptist
Church in New Orleans by the late Dr. Arthur Monday, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Ellis entered the United States Navy in June 1979, and during the
course of his twenty years of faithful service to his country, he was stationed in Italy; his
hometown of New Orleans, Louisiana; San Diego and Point Mugu, California; and finally,
Millington, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, while stationed at Point Mugu, he was selected Sailor of the Year for the
entire U.S. Navy (TAR) and earned his Master of Arts in Theology and Doctorate of Theology
degrees from Golden Grain Bible College and Seminary; and

WHEREAS, Mike Ellis accepted his calling from the Lord to preach the Gospel in
October 1988; he was licensed by the late Pastor Willie J. Moore in February 1989; and

WHEREAS, in May 1990, he graduated from Union Theological Seminary with a
Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology, and in February 1991, he was ordained by the Westside
Missionary Baptist Association, Dr. John A. Brooks, President; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Ellis retired from the United States Navy in February 2000, but continued to work for the Navy in several capacities; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Ellis earned his Doctor of Religious Philosophy degree in Christian Counseling from Jacksonville Theological Seminary in 2003; and

WHEREAS, in April 2006, Pastor Ellis was led by the Holy Spirit to begin Impact Baptist Church (IBC); in its first two and one-half years, IBC experienced explosive physical and spiritual growth, with over 1,000 believers joining the burgeoning religious institution; and

WHEREAS, IBC has baptized more believers than any other predominately African-American church in Tennessee; the church's vision is to influence the whole person and have a far-reaching impact, thus leading Pastor Ellis to found the nonprofit ministry Impact America, which he serves as executive director; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, Pastor Ellis was the first African American to serve as vice president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Pastor Ellis was unanimously elected the president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention; he is the first African-American president in the organization's 141-year history; and

WHEREAS, this noteworthy, historic achievement serves as a testament to Pastor Ellis's stalwart leadership and deep, abiding faith, both of which have been an inspiration to so many; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Ellis is blessed with the love, companionship, and support of his wife of thirty-two years, the former Angela Mahoney; their six children, Derrick, LaToya (Ahard), TraDonna (Robert), Santrell (Brian), Michael, Jr., and Marquise; and four grandchildren, Ares, Amaiya, Malaysia, and Allen; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Ellis is an exemplary leader and his service to his God and his church has positively affected countless lives, and he should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby recognize and honor Dr. Michael C. Ellis, Sr., the first African-American president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, congratulating him upon this historic achievement, thanking him for his many years of devoted service, and extending to him our sincerest wishes for much success and happiness in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.